



# MOUNT DRUITT WORKING FOR KIDS LIVING LAB

## Project Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mount Druitt Working for Kids Living Lab was an initiative of the Child Friendly Mount Druitt Project. The research aimed to support Blacktown City Council's (BCC) commitment to better engage and collaborate with children and communities in Mount Druitt. Specifically, the Council sought a deeper understanding of issues affecting children in Mount Druitt and how to improve child-friendly practices.

Deploying a Living Labs approach, we ran a series of research activities with 40 children, 27 parents and 16 other stakeholders including service providers, community-based practitioners, cultural leaders and representatives from Council, schools and other government initiatives. We conducted informal consultations, key informant interviews, rapid and gamified small-group activities with children, and three workshops: one with community stakeholders, one with parents, and an 'intergenerational' workshop that brought children and adults together. This iterative process gathered participants' concerns and aspirations for Mount Druitt, their views on the importance of community engagement as well as ideas for improving Mount Druitt for the benefit of children

Across the different groups and study activities, participants raised a range of issues concerning children in Mount Druitt. They identified structural factors such as racism, violence, poverty and climate change and local issues such as accessibility of community parks, street lighting and availability of healthy food sources. All participants – children, parents and stakeholders – relayed strong visions and aspirations for the Mount Druitt community. They identified ways to improve community resources, proposed new strategies, programs and infrastructure and together generated child-led action plans to address collectively identified issues. Stakeholders told us about challenges to service provision and offered suggestions for how different challenges might be overcome.

This study specifically explored ways of connecting meaningfully with children and parents who may not typically engage with Council or other consultation or participatory processes. In doing so, we identified ways for children, parents and workers in the area to collaborate in creative ways to generate new ideas and commitments to improve the local community - and which are transferable to other groups.

As the Child Friendly Mount Druitt Project enters a new funding period, and the Communities for Children Program commences a new phase, the Mount Druitt Working for Kids Living Lab research is timely and instructive. The findings reported here extend the foundational work on a joint strategy for children in Mount Druitt that encompasses local organisations and the Blacktown City Council's Community Strategic Plan and is informed by children and those who care for and work with them.

## KEY FINDINGS

### The Approach to Engagement Matters

The whole community (especially children) can be involved when community engagement is conducted in a way that is responsive, works in safe places and with trusted people, is transparent and when lived experience (regardless of age) is openly valued. Local people want to participate. **No one is out of reach.**

Success factors for effective planning and delivery of project insights and outcomes require **Consultation, Purposeful Recruitment, Tailored Methods, Support and Scaffolding.** This means providing people with knowledge and skills they can use to participate and implement ideas. Projects must ensure child-safe and child-friendly environments and use methods appropriate to age and ability.

## Children Will Enthusiastically Engage

Children want to and can readily engage in providing feedback on the activities and programs that they want in their community. They appreciate opportunities to engage in child-specific environments and to work with respectful and enabling adults in tailored and facilitated intergenerational contexts.

Bringing children and adults together to identify challenges, strengths and design better communities helps to **value children's ideas and experiences**, promote shared understanding and commitment to change-making in the community.

## Better Service Accessibility, Communication and Coordination is Needed

Participants identified diverse issues, concerns and responses. Common factors were **accessibility** and **awareness** of opportunities, resources and services, and **engagement** between community, council and services. Addressing these factors has the potential to contribute to broad-based change to benefit all.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This project makes six recommendations that will support progress towards a Child-Friendly City and align with the Blacktown City Council Community Strategic Plan 2036:

### PROMOTE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Expand the ways children can meaningfully inform planning and decision-making feedback across Council, local programs and services. Set expectations high for what can be achieved by engaging with children - and celebrate success!

### VALUE INTERGENERATIONAL PROCESSES

Develop intergenerational processes to promote dialogue, elevate the value of children's voices in the community and improve intergenerational understanding of needs and priorities in the community. Work with community and cultural leaders to foster new ways of working together and fostering new networks and knowledge of child-inclusive community practice.

### CREATE CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY SPACES

Empower, educate, and bring people together to address the issues the community identifies. Support participation by improving resourcing to enable use of current facilities. This should include more staff, specialised support and longer-term funding for programs as well as free transport and childcare. Increase use of culturally appropriate mediums to share information about facilities and programs.

### PRIORITISE CO-DESIGNING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

Public space, basic amenities and structural issues such as racism and inequality all need to be addressed at multiple levels. Children and community members want to be part of the co-design of solutions.

### LEVERAGE ENGAGEMENT TO CREATE INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Build infrastructure in consultation with the community. Focus engagement efforts on those children and community members (including teenagers and young adults) who are not usually asked for their views and ideas.

### ENABLE HEALTHY LIVING

Help overcome barriers to affordable, healthy food by increasing free transport options to retail hubs and supporting initiatives that take healthy food options to where children in low-income families live. Green the city. Support community-based culturally appropriate awareness and education initiatives for adults and children to understand and value healthy food options and activities in ways that do not increase stigma or fear of failure.

# MOUNT DRUITT WORKING FOR KIDS LIVING LAB



## PARTICIPANTS

40 children; 27 parents and 16 service, council and community stakeholders

## ISSUES CONCERNING CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN MOUNT DRUITT

racism; poverty; climate change; accessibility of community parks; street lighting; availability and affordability of healthy food



## VISIONS AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE MOUNT DRUITT COMMUNITY

more community engagement and child participation



## ACTIVITIES

3 workshops; 3 play-based activity sessions; 4 interviews

## CHILDREN'S IDEAS FOR A MOUNT DRUITT THAT WORKS FOR KIDS

promote urban health and safety; end poverty and unemployment; maximise use of existing youth-friendly spaces; stop bullying; end racism; end homelessness



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ **PROMOTE** children's participation and engagement
- ✓ **PRIORITISE** co-designed strategies to promote community safety
- ✓ **CREATE** spaces for adults and children to work together on solutions
- ✓ **PLAN** in consultation with the community especially children and adults who are not usually asked for their views
- ✓ **SUPPORT** people to overcome barriers to healthy living by improving access to healthy, affordable food options and greening the city
- ✓ **BUILD** connected and engaged community spaces that are resourced to enable safe access and use by children and young people of all ages



# CONTENTS

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND .....	10
Child Friendly Mount Drutt Project .....	10
SECTION 2: APPROACH .....	14
A Model for Future Engagement.....	14
Participant-Centric, Collaborative, Flexible, Iterative .....	14
Methods.....	14
Working for Kids Living Lab: Process Diagram .....	17
Recruitment and Participants.....	18
Ethical Considerations .....	20
Data and Analysis .....	20
SECTION 3: FINDINGS .....	22
Engaging with Children and Community .....	22
Critical Issues .....	26
Visions and Aspirations.....	34
SECTION 4: SUMMARY AND INSIGHTS .....	38
Concerns and Solutions .....	39
Advancing Children’s Participation.....	40
Awareness and Collaboration.....	41
Community Awareness.....	41
Communication Between Service Providers For Greater Effectiveness .....	42
SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATIONS .....	43
SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS .....	46
APPENDICES.....	47



# BACKGROUND

The Child Friendly Mount Druitt Project seeks to increase child friendly practices among services and engage the voices of children in decision making. The Mount Druitt Working for Kids Living Lab (Living Lab) trialled a child-centred approach to collaborating with children, parents and workers to identify and develop shared ideas for making Mount Druitt a more child-friendly place.

Situated within Blacktown City, Mount Druitt has a young, diverse population with 20 per cent of residents under 12 years old (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016<sup>1</sup>). More than 60% of residents speak a language other than English and around 25% arrived in Australia in the last 5 years (iDProfile, 2016<sup>2</sup>). Mount Druitt is a vibrant community with many strengths including community-led initiatives. But for a significant number of households, life is tough: unemployment is nearly twice the national average and weekly earnings are significantly less. The Blacktown City Community Strategic Plan (2017<sup>3</sup>) identifies community engagement as a focus for addressing community needs, aspirations and priorities. Key to this is ongoing engagement with local people – including children – to understand the challenges and strengths of the area and foster ideas and relationships to support better outcomes for children and their families.

## CHILD FRIENDLY MOUNT DRUITT PROJECT

In 2012, Blacktown City Council signed up as a UNICEF Child Friendly City (CFC). Since 2016, the Child Friendly Mount Druitt Project – funded through Mission Australia’s Communities for Children Program – has been run by Blacktown City Council with a focus on children 12 years and under within the Mount Druitt 2770 postcode area. The Child Friendly Mount Druitt Project is informed by the CFC Model and works towards full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level. The project has successfully engaged a wide range of stakeholders in diverse projects and events and trialled and implemented different methods of engaging with children: from programs and events to consultations and a Children’s Conference. The CFC and child-rights approaches support progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by situating children as both partners and beneficiaries of the goals.

The Child Friendly Mount Druitt Project has worked across Council and with schools and local organisations who work with children and families in Mount Druitt. This aligns with the Blacktown City Council Community Strategic Plan *Our Blacktown 2036* and has contributed to a practical interpretation and deepening of the strategic directions, outcomes and focus areas of the Plan with and for children. The Plan includes a commitment to engaging meaningfully with the community to create a great city that is:

1. A vibrant and inclusive city
2. A clean, sustainable and healthy environment
3. A smart and prosperous economy
4. A growing city supported by accessible infrastructure
5. A sporting and active city
6. A leading city

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2012) Census of Population and Housing.

<sup>2</sup> [profile.id.com.au/blacktown/overseas-arrivals?WebID=320](http://profile.id.com.au/blacktown/overseas-arrivals?WebID=320)

<sup>3</sup> Blacktown City Council, (2017) *Our Blacktown 2036: Our Vision, Our Plan*. Available online: [www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/About-Council/What-we-do/Community-Strategic-Plan](http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/About-Council/What-we-do/Community-Strategic-Plan)

A leading city where children's rights are upheld and they live in a child safe, child friendly city is a key aspiration for the Child Friendly Mount Drutt Project. UNICEF has highlighted that the "healthy development of children is crucial to the future well-being of any society" (UNICEF, 2021<sup>4</sup>). The whole community can potentially benefit from becoming more child friendly.

As the Child Friendly Mount Drutt Project is entering a new funding period and the Communities for Children Program commences a new phase the Mount Drutt Working for Kids Living Lab research is timely. The study reported here extends the foundational work on a joint child friendly plan for children in Mount Drutt that encompasses the work of both local organisations and the Blacktown City Council. Key steps towards this, on which the Mount Drutt Working for Kids Living Lab research builds, are summarised below.

## **Achieving Child Safe Standards**

Children's safety is foundational to their wellbeing, health and participation in communities. The 10 Child Safe Standards released by the Office of the Children's Guardian are being implemented by Council, including three Standards regarding engagement of children and families:

- Standard 2: Children can participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- Standard 3: Organisations actively engage with families and communities to support children
- Standard 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs of children are taken into account

The Child Safe Committee at Council is a cross-departmental group tasked with overseeing the implementation and ongoing monitoring of the Child Safe Standards within Council. The committee is one avenue for achieving consistency and best practice across Council's work that impacts children.

## **Existing Council Approaches to Community Consultation**

In 2019, Council adopted the Community Engagement Strategy with a toolkit released to support good community engagement amongst staff. Council has engaged the community in many ways aligned to the International Association for Public Participation (iAP2) spectrum: inform, involve, collaborate. The strategy also identifies the need for continuous improvement and additional efforts to reach sections of the community that are seldom heard. Council's Child Friendly Mount Drutt Project has found that children often face additional barriers to engaging in Council feedback mechanisms. As such, tailored approaches, building the collaboration skills and capacities of workers and children, and better resourcing for this work are required to achieve best practice in this area.

Across Council, community engagement happens on a project-by-project basis with a range of strategies deployed in both online and offline settings. These include activities that engage children within the general population, and those that target children's participation to inform Council planning and decision-making. There is a strong foundation for enhancing Council's engagement with children by diversifying strategies and methods for reaching and hearing children's views as well as mechanisms that foster dialogue and collaboration between children and adults to develop and activate ideas that generate positive change in the community.

The following are examples of engagement activities at the Inform, Involve and Collaborate levels across Council that have included children:

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<sup>4</sup> UNICEF (2021) *Why build a child friendly city?* Accessed 27/7/2021: *Why build a child-friendly city?* | Child Friendly Cities Initiative

## INFORM: BLACKTOWN CITY FESTIVAL

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Council aimed to attract local and regional attendees as well as showcase local and regional talent. Promoted through a variety of online and offline mediums it attracted over 50,000 people including children to the main festival day, with all stages having representation from local talent.

## INVOLVE: ENDEAVOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK, KINGS LANGLEY

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Council engaged with local households, local primary school, community groups, real estate agents, the police, the Roads and Maritime Services to influence the park design. Multiple feedback sessions were conducted as well as online surveys, phone calls, emails and design sessions with children. Community involvement in the design phase culminated in an award-winning park with community consensus that it is an asset for the community.

## COLLABORATE: THE CLIMB MOUNT DRUITT CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE

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In late 2018, The Climb: Mount Druitt Children's Conference brought together students aged 8 to 13 years from schools across Mount Druitt. Schools were engaged through principals and a public speaking challenge, identifying 6 keynote speakers, performances and attendance. Over 100 children participated. One of the outcomes of the conference was a consultation report of children's views on belonging, aspirations, change and activities that children wanted to see in their communities. This consultation is reflected in the Blacktown Social Profile 2020 and the draft Child Friendly Action Plan.

The release of the Community Engagement policy and toolkit as well as the meaningful implementation of the Child Safe Standards present an opportune time to reflect on, extend and embed consistent good practice in child and family engagement across Council's work. At the local level, children's participation can "lead to better services, more responsive local policies and plans, and a more effective use of local budgets in support of children's priorities" (UNICEF, 2019<sup>5</sup>). More and better engagement with children – including those who are often left out or overlooked - will enhance Council and other stakeholders' understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the City to promote child health and wellbeing. Moreover, bringing children and adult perspectives together can result in mutual transformation to achieve better outcomes.

**A child-friendly city is a better city for all.**

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<sup>5</sup> UNICEF (2019) Child participation in local governance, UNICEF. Accessed 27/7/2021: [UNICEF-Child-Participation-in-Local-Governance.pdf](#)

## Project Aims

The Mount Druiitt Working for Kids Living Lab project had two main aims:

1. Trial a process for child and adult engagement to better understand how different stakeholders (including children, parents, Council, and local services) can collaborate on local issues.
2. Investigate issues of concern as raised by children, parents, and workers to inform a collective action plan for and with children in Mount Druiitt.

As the aims suggest, this project is as much about reflecting on and elevating how we engaged children and parents as it is about what we heard from people on the issues that matter to them. The project started with an intention to explore three issues: Opportunities for Play, Food Access, and Digital Inclusion. The issues were chosen based on feedback from children, parents and workers in the Mount Druiitt area and because they were either persistent and or worsened by the Covid 19 pandemic.



*Intergenerational Workshop Group*

## APPROACH

### A MODEL FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Blacktown City Council has a range of current strategies to interact with children and families. Those strategies are regularly audited and reviewed by Council as they consider ways to improve their effectiveness and potentially leverage them to increase children's engagement and participation in consultations. Council recognises the criticality of offline engagement and ensuring methods are sustainable, and the challenges of staffing and resourcing effective and ongoing engagement.

Recognising Council interest in effective mechanisms for engagement, we designed our research activities to model a potential approach that could be used and adapted by Council and others to engage with children, families, groups/services and individual community members. Towards this aim we used a Living Lab approach to gather qualitative data from the three relevant participant groups living or working in the Mount Druitt area: children, parents and caregivers and professionals working for local government, non-government organisations and other services.

### PARTICIPANT-CENTRIC, COLLABORATIVE, FLEXIBLE, ITERATIVE

A Living Lab is a participant-centred co-research and co-design process to engage diverse stakeholders in identifying challenges, generating evidence, and co-designing solutions. Over ten years, we have refined a child and youth-centred, trans-cultural and intergenerational Living Lab approach for face-to-face and remote delivery in Australia and more than 60 other countries (Third et al., 2021<sup>6</sup>). The process generates quantitative and qualitative data that can be used to collaboratively identify issues and opportunities and contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs. Furthermore, this approach to research can foster new networks, partnerships and publics - as well as 'products' (Collin & Swist, 2015<sup>7</sup>).

Living labs are participant-centric processes. This means that participants are supported to openly express their views, deliberate, and collaborate with others and describe lived experiences that are relevant to questions, issues and solutions to identified problems. Importantly, the Living Lab process is also responsive: the design of different activities should adapt to changing information about, or circumstances of, partners and participants. For example, throughout the course of a project we review how we are engaging with participants and adapt our design and implementation to maximise value for our research goals and for participants themselves.

## METHODS

The final methods used in the Living Lab were document review, scoping meetings and workshop, semi-structured interviews, generative and co-design workshops and play-based activities. These are detailed below. The collaborative project team was made up of three researchers from the Young and Resilient Research Centre at Western Sydney and one staff member from the Community Development section at Blacktown City Council.

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<sup>6</sup> Third, A., Lala, G., Moody, L., & Theakstone, G. (2021, forthcoming). Children's Views on Digital Health in the Global South: Perspectives from Cross-National, Creative and Participatory Workshops. In D. Lupton & D. Leahy (Eds), *Creative Approaches to Health Education New Ways of Thinking, Making, Doing, Teaching and Learning*. Routledge

<sup>7</sup> Collin, P. & Swist, T. (2016) From Products to Publics: Youth as co-designers in social marketing campaigns. *Journal of Youth Studies* 19(3): 305 – 318.

## **Document Review**

Existing reports, frameworks and strategies informing the Child-Friendly Mount Druitt Project were reviewed along with evidence of children and community perspectives on local challenges and opportunities. These informed the selection of target participants (children and parents not usually involved in community consultations), local services and professionals and the topics for investigation.

## **Informed and Responsive Scoping and Design**

In keeping with our aim to be sensitive to the contexts, needs and capacities of children and families, we consulted with key service and community leaders and ran a scoping workshop with providers and practitioners before we began our formal research activities. Consultations were with prominent or influential community members including for example, Aboriginal leaders, community workers and parent leaders. These informal engagements informed our broad process and specific activities to be appropriate and accessible to children and parents in the community. Consultations were a ‘weathervane’ to help us make sure our overall goals and approach for the study remained relevant and useful to the Council and the community.

The scoping workshop informed the focus of the research questions and the methods used. For example, participants in the scoping workshop suggested we deemphasise the issue of Digital Inclusion in favour of Food Access and Play because those themes would be more immediately significant for children and families (and because digital technology use could cut across the latter two themes). As the study progressed, we found that parents also prioritised other issues above Digital Inclusion. Scoping workshop participants also emphasised the importance of keeping children’s research activities fun and engaging. Accordingly, our design focussed activities with children around the after-school Mount Druitt Play Project and a single parent workshop.

Research team debrief meetings after activities informed the design of subsequent activities and helped ensure maximum engagement (e.g., we made minor changes to Play Project activities based on children’s engagement and responsiveness, and we determined the timing location and content of the final intergenerational workshop from the knowledge we gained through our interactions with parents).

Our final study design included key informant interviews, generative workshops to explore issues, priorities and ideas and an intergenerational workshop based on ‘design thinking’ to come up with ideas for making Mount Druitt a great place for children.

## **Key Informant Interviews**

Interviews were designed to elicit views on current engagement practices, ideas and perceptions about the purpose and value of engaging with children and to identify how the local context contributes to challenges and opportunities for service provision. Interviews lasted 40-60 minutes and followed a defined interview guide, allowing scope for further exploration of specific themes and ideas as they arose. Interview content was interrogated by thematic analysis, using a combination of themes derived from the original research questions and themes generated through the interview content.

## **Play-based Consultations**

From May – June 2021 Blacktown City Council offered a free after-school program for children in the Mount Druitt area (the Mount Druitt Play Project). After school program sessions ran between 3.15-5.00pm and were held weekly on different days at four locations around Mount Druitt. The Mount Druitt Play Project included facilitated activities including games, sports,

construction and music activities for primary school-age children<sup>12</sup>. Children could attend as and when they wanted, and sessions attracted between 6-12 regular attendees weekly.

Three 'quick-fire' data collection activities were run with children during regular Play Project sessions in three different geographical locations around Mount Druitt to help capture views and experiences from children of diverse ages and backgrounds. Gamified activities were designed to blend as closely as possible to the types of facilitated recreational activities children experienced in their regular sessions. Activities gathered children's feedback on: a new park and play area being constructed by Council; Play Project activities and ideas for new ones; and, the foods they eat and their perceptions of healthy foods (see Appendix 2 for details).

Success of these activities was mixed. In all three locations we captured useful data about children's opinions and preferences for a new local park. However, children's engagement in activities assessing the Play Project program and surfacing their experiences of food and diet varied between locations with not all children following instructions and actively engaging in the task affecting the data collected.

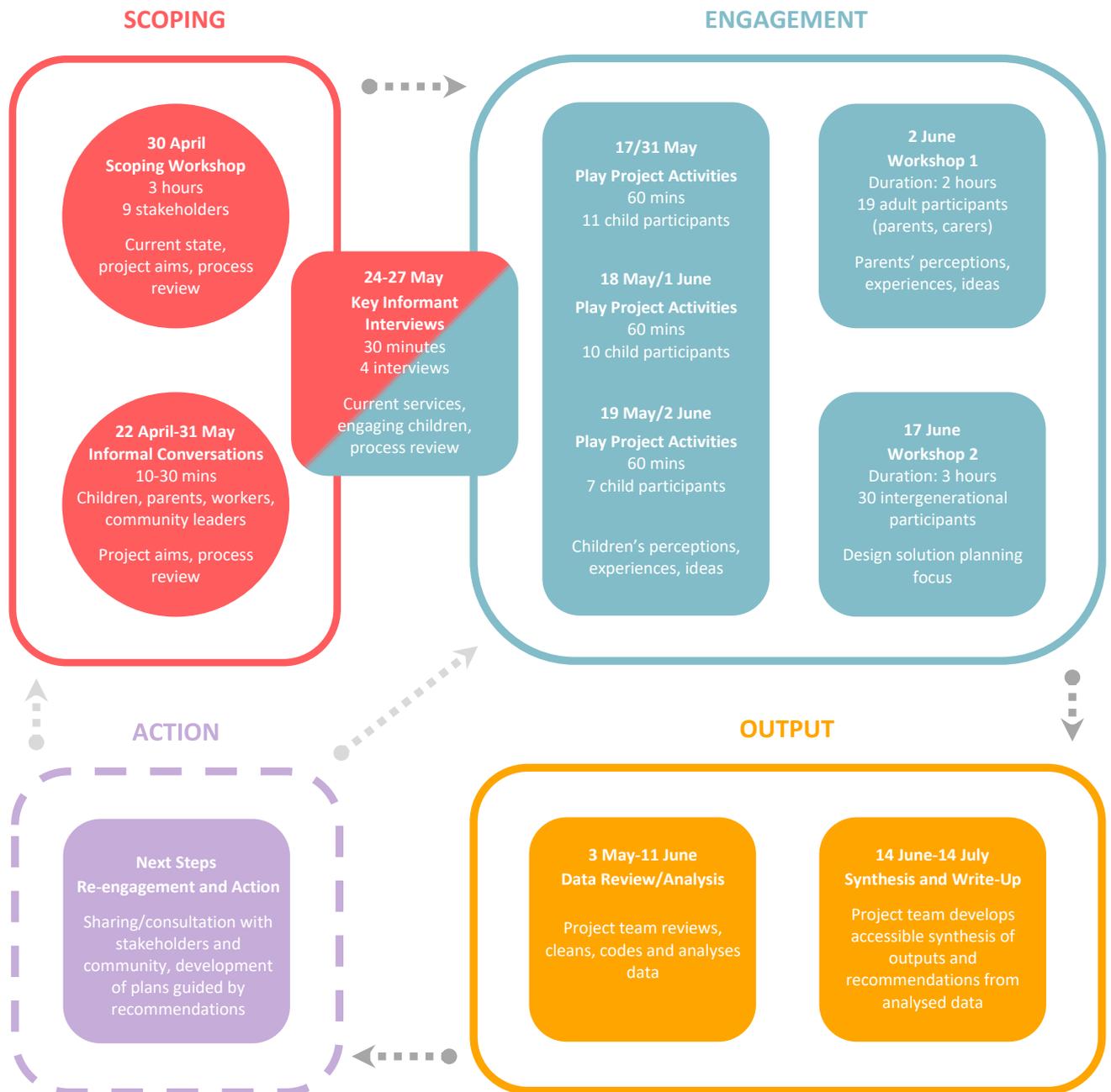
## Workshops

Three workshops gathered perspectives of children, parents and carers and key stakeholders:

- a. **A three-hour scoping workshop** was conducted with key stakeholders from community organisations, non-government service providers, local schools and Council as described above Appendix 1).
- b. **A two-hour parent workshop**, facilitated by WSU and Council research team members, was held with parents and carers from the Mount Druitt area. The workshop included individual and small group activities (Appendix 3). Specifically, participants were asked to feed back about Council's new park and play area; document their family's typical food consumption and challenges and opportunities for healthy eating; surface issues of concern in the community; and, explore ideas about how Council and services might better communicate and engage with children and families in Mount Druitt. As with interviews, thematic analysis was applied to the data using themes derived from research questions and organically generated through the workshop content.
- c. **A three-hour intergenerational workshop** involved children, parents and carers and local service providers. The workshop involved individual, small group and whole-of-group discussions to stimulate both adult and children's active engagement and ensure their comfort and wellbeing. Workshops were led by members of the WSU research team and Blacktown City Council staff.

The workshop began with a recap of project aims and a general description of key findings to date. Then, working in mixed groups of adults and children, participants completed a series of creative and collaborative activities designed to explore shared understandings of community; identify important community issues, challenges and solutions; and develop ideas and plans for actions that could address those issues (Appendix 4). Collaborative group work between adults and children was encouraged, but groups were urged to prioritise children's points-of-view and ideas. Accordingly, final plans for action were child-centred, strongly representing children's views on community issues and potential solutions. Thematic analysis of the data was incorporated into final outcomes and recommendations.

# WORKING FOR KIDS LIVING LAB: PROCESS DIAGRAM



**SCOPING:** formal and informal interactions with key informants on project goals and process, and current state including review of existing data and reports

**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS:** with community leaders and service managers to inform project implementation and generate research data

**ENGAGEMENT:** formal research activities with community members and service providers

**OUTPUT:** analysis of research data and production of outputs and recommendations appropriate for dissemination to key partners and participants

**ACTION:** consideration of outputs and recommendations by partners and re-engagement with relevant community and decisionmakers for ongoing, sustainable and responsive implementation. Although beyond the scope of the current project, action can further inform iterations of scoping and engagement to develop sustainable engagement processes.

## RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPANTS

We aimed for a diverse range of stakeholders in all activities and to capture a wide spectrum of views and experiences. Participants had local lived experience – as children, parents, or workers. Local workers who had previously expressed an interest and commitment to child voice and intergenerational collaboration were chosen to take part. There was a particular focus on cultural diversity and representation of people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Recruitment was through three main channels: trust and professional networks (stakeholders); the Mount Druitt Play Project and local schools (children, parents and carers); and Bidwill Uniting (parents and carers). Specific recruitment processes for each are detailed below.

Participation was completely voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all participants individually (adults and children) and additionally, for children, from their parents or carers. Parents were provided with an honorarium and children were given a ‘lucky dip’ prize to thank them for taking part. Overall, 40 children, 27 parents and 16 other stakeholders including service providers, representatives from schools and Council, community-based practitioners and cultural leaders took part. Table 1 provides a summary of participants in the project:

### Project Participants

Activity	Participants	Characteristics
Scoping Workshop	9	8 Female and 1 Male from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council (1)</li> <li>• Non-government organisations (6)</li> <li>• Community groups (1)</li> <li>• Local school (1)</li> </ul>
Children’s Activities	28	Kimberwalli (Whalan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 children (ages 9 – 11 years)</li> </ul> Lethbridge Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 children (ages 5 – 11 years)</li> </ul> Emerton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 children (ages 6 – 13 years)</li> </ul>
Parents’ Workshop (Hosted at Bidwill Uniting)	19	Mount Druitt Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 Female</li> </ul>
Intergenerational Workshop	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service providers = 5 (4 Female, 1 Male)</li> <li>• Adults = 11 (10 Female, 1 Male)</li> <li>• Children = 14 (8 Female, 6 Male)</li> </ul>
Interviews	4	Local service provider representatives

Two children took part in three different sessions, nine parents took part in both the Bidwill workshop and the intergenerational workshop. A further three parents who had taken part in the earlier parents’ workshop registered for the intergenerational workshop but were unable to attend for a range of reasons (e.g., managing care of multiple children, lack of transport, illness).

## Key Informant Interviews

Four in-depth interviews were conducted by a single WSU research team member (see Appendix 5 for interview schedule). Participants were chosen based on their knowledge of current trends and issues as well as direct work with children and/or families. Key informants (community leaders or service managers) had an existing relationship with the Child Friendly Community project and were personally introduced to the research team by Blacktown City Council<sup>a</sup>.

## After-School Small Group Sessions with Children

Recruitment of children occurred through the Mount Druitt Play Project. Project team members from WSU and Council attended session at three different locations in the week before data collection activities to introduce themselves to session facilitators and attending children. The following week, team members attended the same sessions and ran data collection activities. Due to the age and anticipated literacy level of the children, two members of the research team created a short video to explain the research and workshop purpose to children and parents. The video was distributed to partner organisations in the Mount Druitt Play Project as well as via text to parents of children who attended the after-school program. Prior to participation, researchers contacted parents of all participating children by phone to explain the project, answer any questions and obtain verbal consent.

## Parents' Workshop

Initial liaison for the parent workshop was with the Mission Australia young parents' network however due to timing constraints we were not able to connect with this group. Instead, the research team worked with Bidwill Uniting to host a workshop with parents promoted through their network and coinciding with a free play session – Tiny Tots Soccer – held at the Community Centre. The week prior research team members attended the session to meet parents and promote the workshop. The workshop was also promoted via the Bidwell Uniting Facebook page and a flyer and video were shared with parents who had registered kids with the Mount Druitt Play Project sessions. Participants responses to the workshop were strongly favourable and over 70 percent of participants expressed interest in attending the final intergenerational workshop.

## Intergenerational Workshop

Participants in the concluding intergenerational workshop included parents who had taken part in the parents' workshop, children from Play Project activities and children and stakeholders who were first time participants in the project. However, community interest in the workshop was such that only parents who had attended the parent workshop were invited to take part. Selective recruitment of parent participants in this manner served to optimise the ratio of child/adult participants and maximise effective facilitation and engagement in activities as attending parents were familiar with the project.

To further ensure children felt comfortable to actively participate, we designed recruitment so that higher numbers of children would attend. With school leadership support, student leaders at a local school, from a range of cultural backgrounds and abilities, attended as a representative group. Researchers met with student leaders two days prior to the workshop to brief them on project and workshop aims. Parental information and consent forms for attending children were shared and returned via the school. A small number of child and teenage participants attended with family members.

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<sup>a</sup> We acknowledge Claire Simmonds, Sonia Kalsi and Stacey Dellow for their involvement in the project as service provider interviewees. We also acknowledge the participation of one anonymous interviewee.



*Intergenerational Workshop Groups*

Image: @YoungResilient/2021

Parent participation was supported with an honorarium and provision of childcare for children under eight years old. Child participants were given pencils and toys, distributed during gamified activity breaks during the workshop to thank them for taking part. Refreshments, including a catered dinner, were also provided to all participants.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The research received ethics approval from Western Sydney University's Human Research Ethics Committee (No. HH14362). Ethical procedures for this project adhered to child safeguarding principles outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Australia), the Commonwealth Child Safe framework, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australia), and policies and practices to protect children as mandated by Blacktown City Council. The research design was informed by local providers and practitioners from Council, local schools and non-government service providers who were consulted prior to the research commencing.

All participants were given information about the research, including the aim/s and contact details of the researchers. Information was available in hard copy, digital formats, and verbally. All materials were provided in child-friendly language. Prior to consent completion, participants were given opportunities to query the research and process. Information materials emphasised that decisions about participation would in no way change any relationships with Blacktown City Council or associated organisations or provision or access to services. Consent was obtained in written and verbal form.

## **DATA AND ANALYSIS**

Basic demographic information was recorded during key informant interviews (full name, age, gender, job title and description, organisational affiliation). Interviews generated transcribed data about the following topics: interviewee's experiences of challenges and opportunities in their role as service providers both generally and more specifically in their organisation's work with children, their perceptions about children's access to healthy foods and their ideas about

engaging children about issue and service provision relevant and important to children and young people.

Minimal demographic information was collected in after-school activities with children and the parents' and intergenerational workshops (name, age, gender). Data from after-school activities consisted of polling numbers representing children's preferences about types of activities and food preferences. Workshop data consisted of participants' drawings and writing on butchers' paper and observations and notes taken by workshop facilitators. Data were digitised and anonymised for coding and analysis. Our coding scheme captured key overarching themes: Play; Food; Community Engagement; Key issues; Community Strengths; Children's participation; Aspirations and Visions for the community. Emergent themes were discussed by the research team and recorded secondarily. Coded data was sorted and analysed thematically and by participant and data collection type. Text was processed for phrase and word frequencies. The data did not allow for meaningful comparison *between* participant groups.

Intergenerational Workshop Data Collection



## FINDINGS

The project aimed to 1) Trial a process for child and adult engagement to better understand how children, parents, Council, and local services can collaborate on local issues, and 2) Explore issues that matter and gather community feedback on different issues raised by children, parents, and workers to inform a collective action plan for and with children in Mount Druitt.

Our findings are presented here in three sections: *Engaging with Children and Community*; *Critical Issues*; and *Visions and Aspirations*.

### ENGAGING WITH CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY

Successful engagement and participation by children and parents was directly linked to the approach and framework we used to enable strong participation throughout the project. Success factors were:

#### Consultation

Before research activities we engaged with local parents, service and Council workers and community leaders to get their feedback and recommendations about our proposed approach. Their localised knowledge and experience was invaluable for ensuring our study was accessible and relevant to the community members.

#### Purposeful Recruitment

We recruited participants through existing strong trust relationships (e.g., Council and NGO networks) and at familiar locations (e.g., community centres, Play Project sites). When recruiting for the intergenerational workshop we were mindful of ensuring that more than half of the participants were children and that parents would not be outnumbered by service or Council representatives.

#### Tailored Methods

We combined traditional methods (e.g., semi-structured interviews) and non-traditional methods (e.g., gamified activities, facilitated collaborative workshops) to generate and capture data. Our methods frequently involved creative, and collaborative activities like drawing and collaborative writing, and we incorporated regular breaks in our intergenerational workshop where we led participants in playful ice-breaker games.

#### Support

We made sure we talked to all participants about how important their contributions were and the value we placed on their views and ideas. To demonstrate our appreciation of people's time, expertise and lived experiences, we provided food, vouchers (for parents) or prizes (for children), and childcare was provided during the parents' and intergenerational workshops to support participation of parents of younger children.

#### Scaffolding

We achieved a flexible approach that was responsive to ongoing participant feedback and needs through detailed and systematic planning of research sessions. Sessions involved discrete activities within an overall structure, with a logical flow between activities that helped to demonstrate coherence and clarity of purpose. Insights and ideas generated by participants from prior activities were the building blocks for the design of later activities so that participants' insights iteratively contributed to the study's overall outcomes.

**Applying a spectrum of engagement across the project, this incorporated *informing, involving and collaborating* (iAP2) in different ways and with different stakeholders.**

## Community Engagement

The feedback we sought and received from parents and service providers about ways to effectively engage children and families strengthened our research engagements and reinforced the value of participants' points of view. Participants identified key factors impacting community engagement.

### Opportunity

Parents strongly affirmed the importance of engagement between communities, service providers and decision-makers (e.g., Council) but felt that many community members were unaware of how to engage or had few opportunities to have a say and play a meaningful role in community planning or decision-making. Participants proposed more contact between communities and decision-makers and service providers, and that people whose voices are rarely heard should be prioritised. Key informants agreed that successful problem-solving requires direct engagement with community members themselves – especially young people:

*"We don't consult with youth enough. We don't go to a child and ask what would work for you? We need to "flip the triangle"."* (Key informant interview)

*"Connecting with the community to ask them what they wanted, and how they wanted it and how they needed it delivered"* (Key Informant interview)

Parents also noted the value of opportunities for contact in comments following the workshop:

*"I think Council should do this more regularly"* (Parents' workshop)

*"Thanks for asking me what I think – no one usually does that"* (Parents' workshop)

### Accessibility

Parents suggested one way to improve awareness and participation in engagement opportunities, is for Council to use a wider variety of mediums to share information,

including using online communications and resurrecting community papers and letterbox drops:

*"Council communication: online forum/Facebook; community paper; Blacktown City Council events calendar; more community workshops; letter box drops"* (Parents' workshop)

*"User friendly app: activities list incorporated in calendar (agencies, council); council suggestion letterbox drops by groups"* (Parents' workshop)

Key informants reinforced the importance of better communication and more accessible and meaningful community engagement for their work:

*"Parents/carers were eager to know what was happening in their local area, they felt overall there was a lack of awareness in the community due to poor communication from the Council."* (Key Informant)

Acknowledging significant constraints, such as resourcing, commonly impacted service providers' capacities to properly engage with relevant communities, informants also said personalised support for participation is important:

*"The other big factor is just families aren't aware of what's on what's available. A better way of getting that information out... is to be constantly reminded, texted. ... that personal text - come on don't forget this is on tomorrow, do you need a lift, how can we help you?"* (Key Informant)

### **Partnership**

Participants identified the key roles of dialogue and collaboration. Parents strongly endorsed making use of trusted community and cultural actors to support effective engagement and support awareness of opportunities for engagement that were more accessible to the community. Stakeholders reinforced this message, highlighting the importance of recognising and partnering with community and cultural leaders from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Pasifika and other CALD communities; parent, church and community organisations; school, student and young people's groups:

*"Have a talk with the community. Whether that's elders, services, young people, and that will probably be in different sessions. And just ask them, you know, what is it that you need for this community to give you the opportunities? And you know, as service providers, how can we create the opportunities for these?" (Key Informant)*

### **Children's Engagement**

All participants in the intergenerational workshop highlighted that children should be given more opportunities to engage in formal decision-making process in the community, and have their views listened to and their rights respected more widely. Intergenerational workshop participants felt there was inadequate engagement with children and key informants also suggested there was scope to better accommodate engagement with young people in their practices.

The factors participants identified as important to general engagement with community members are relevant to engaging with children, but we did also ask participants for their views about engaging with children specifically. While important for engaging effectively with children, the factors identified are also relevant when considering broader engagement with multiple groups or cohorts.

### **Trust**

Trust was highlighted for effective engagement generally, and key informants particularly underlined the crucial role of trust when working with children and the investment required to building effective relationships to allow meaningful engagement with children to occur:

### **Diversity**

Blacktown City, has the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Greater Western Sydney and so working with Indigenous communities was seen as essential, but key informants also emphasised the role of diverse cultural affiliations:

*"I'm very hard on this line in the fact that if you're a service provider, in Mount Druitt, there is absolutely no reason why you are not connecting with traditional custodians." (Key Informant)*

*"Our women's support groups are basically multicultural. So, we encourage people from other communities to come and join them. And I think this is the right way of looking into, and, you know, trying to eradicate some of the problems between different communities is to bring them together and showcase that." (Key Informant)*

*"Truthfully, it can be something as simple as I'm getting more conversation out of kids... like or throwing the ball or, but they don't even realize I'm asking them questions. Just doing that. And just so it doesn't even have to be too planned. I suppose it's more than just spontaneous, sort of natural." (Key informant interview)*

*“Just going down and spending weeks playing with them... and then you start to get that trust and not too full on, [like] if you sit in front of a child or a young person and say that looking me in the eye and start asking them questions. It has to be in a more organic way.” (Key informant interview)*

*“We need a space with children where they feel safe enough to communicate with us to tell us what's going on.” (Key informant interview)*

Building trusting relationships with parents – and helping them see the benefits of their child’s participation - was also seen as necessary:

*“What I'm noticing, particularly if you want to get children to these activities, the parents need to be taking them and pushing it. And I just don't think [they will] until they really start to see some benefits, I suppose. There's been some children coming to some of the after-school programs, but you know, they come down for a few minutes, and they lose interest in what's happening, and they leave. So, unless parents are there, you know, pushing them to stay. It's incredibly difficult to have them stay.” (Key informant interview)*

### **Authenticity**

Key informants criticised tokenistic effort or approaches and argued for more considered and genuine efforts:

*“A lot of the agencies just wanted to put up a table and stand behind the table and give out flyers. And I pushed back on that over the last couple of years and said, no, you should be running activities should be doing it, you should be having a chat with and engaging with the young people while you're doing something with them. And I*

*got a bit of, like some services, were ‘absolutely, that's exactly what we need to do’. Other services were just like, you know, we just want to tick off tick box and say, we went to this event and gave out flyers.” (Key informant interview)*

Ultimately these approaches contributed to the lack of effort to hear from and work with children:

*“I don't believe children or young people are being heard quite to the extent that they should. Yeah, I think it tends to focus on the parents. Um, so I think that is something that needs to be worked on.” (Key informant interview)*

### **Resources**

Participants identified more prosaic requirements for children’s engagement. For example, providing basic resources such as transport to enable children and young people to take part:

*“But it's also like just logistical things, transport. You know, a lot of people don't drive... There's only one bus, you know, in the whole area. Ubers or taxis are expensive, you know... because I've got that issue ... there's kids that want to come but I have no ability to go and pick them up.” (Key informant interview)*

Key informants also identified that adequate resourcing of time and effort is needed. For example, building relationships can involve long lead times to co-design child-engagement processes and activities, and establish meaningful collaborations with services, groups and cultural and community leaders who are trusted by local children:

*“[To be effective you need] full-on engagement: where you're walking around and constantly texting people and reminding them that it's on and, you know, really getting in there. That's the work that*



damage to public property), security at home (e.g., break ins) and interpersonal safety (e.g., domestic violence):

*“Problem: break ins/stealing cars; Ideas: CCTV/community watch groups” (Parents’ Workshop)*

*“Problem: domestic violence; Ideas: more support for families and education; workshops empowering families” (Parents’ Workshop)*

Parents called for well maintained and age-appropriate play spaces, free from litter and broken glass, cigarette butts and syringes. They suggested better lighting and fencing, and more outdoor areas monitored by park rangers, including spaces with enforced access times where equipment was secured after hours. General facilities for kids and parents to use, such as clean and safe toilets, were regularly identified as lacking:

*“Safe place for kids to play; toilets with changing tables (Parents’ workshop)*

Intergenerational workshop ideas for addressing environmental and infrastructure issues included better safety (improved street lighting, more closed-circuit cameras), access (upgraded roads, more public transport), infrastructure (community gardens, tourist attractions, artworks, murals, more playground equipment, pools, sports fields) and knowledge/learning exchange (job expos, diversity workshops):

*“Problem: trees and shade; Ideas: plant more trees; involve the community to plant*

*more; community garden” (Intergenerational Workshop)*

*“Problem: not enough toilets in parks + train stations; Ideas: more toilets regularly cleaned + community service” (Intergenerational Workshop)*

*“Problem: graffiti; Ideas: public mural education “take pride” respect; Problem: not enough parking near station; Ideas: more parking” (Intergenerational Workshop)*

Parents wanted dedicated spaces and activities designed for the needs of specific cohorts of young people, including younger children, teens, young adults and young people with disabilities. The lack of community resources devoted to older teenagers and young adults was clearly identified in the intergenerational workshop. Intergenerational participants suggested the deficit of resources for those groups had potentially wide impacts, including anti-social behaviour affecting the broader community and encroachment by older teenagers into spaces designed for younger children, depriving those younger children of access:

*“Nothing for teenagers - parks, activities for older kids; transport for older kids (shuttle bus); more activities for 15 to 21 [years]; teenagers being silly [anti-social]; life skills for youth; leadership programs for youth; teens mentoring teens; reduced crime rate and youth rebelliousness” (Intergenerational Workshop)*

## Food Access

Participants said healthy diets were hard to maintain for many families because sources of healthy foods were often difficult to access or unaffordable. They said those barriers were frequently compounded by a lack of knowledge about identifying and preparing healthy foods, and by social or cultural beliefs and habits. Direct provision of more subsidised healthy food sources was seen as one solution, as was increasing accessibility by improving public transport options and reach. Some suggested making use of trusted community members and organisations to deliver awareness and education campaigns.

When asked directly about access to healthy foods, parents pointed to a lack of affordable and good-quality food sources in the community. They wanted more, cheaper or free healthy food options, including increased availability of basic staples such as fruit, vegetables, milk and bread, and access and affordability could be improved through vouchers, hampers, or community relief services/centres:

*“Paid/free hampers – the food is low quality: degrading; Coles/Woollies - food not as fresh as other areas [e.g., higher income suburbs]” (Parents’ workshop)*

For many parents, being unable to travel to places where healthy food could be purchased at affordable prices was a barrier to accessing healthy food. One suggestion was to increase mobile community pantries or delivery of low-cost food bundles to ‘where people live’.

Interestingly, while some parents felt that children’s lack of awareness and education about healthy food choices as well as peer-group social norms led to unhealthy eating, children described eating and liking plenty of fruits, vegetables and supermarket staples alongside less healthy options such as fast foods and ice cream, biscuits, and chips. Parents also noted that particular cultural practices and parents who are over-worked and time-poor can contribute to children’s unhealthy eating:

*“Parents overworked - no time/unclear to think about healthy eating; parents: why bother buying fresh food when children aren't eating them - more expensive for healthy food; stigma/pressure to make every meal healthy – but ok to give kids beans on toast sometimes” (Parents’ workshop)*

Key informants agreed with parents’ perceptions that food in the Mount Drutt community is expensive and/or of inferior quality, and that family budgets can limit access to any, much less, affordable food:

*“Lack of funds because fresh fruit and vegetables cost a lot more than takeaway. You know, that's a big thing.” (Key Informant)*

*“You go to you buy cheap things there, but then the quality is hopeless.” (Key Informant)*

*“There's possibly just not food in the house. So, I mean, schools are doing their best and you know, like Emerton, they try and provide food, but often, the kids are coming in to school, and that's the first food they've eaten for the day.” (Key Informant)*

However, key informants felt that the overall number of outlets where healthy foods could be bought may not in itself be inadequate, but that those outlets tended to be clustered around centralised shopping centres and in

large retail chains. This, and relatively low ownership of private transport coupled with poor public transport availability, meant that centralisation of food outlets were beyond practical reach for many families:

*“There's plenty of places available. There are multiple shopping centres. But again, the big chains, like Woolies and Coles, and, you know, there are places that do have the food bank, you know, but they're in locations that are hard to get to. So, you know, it defeats the purpose because people can't get to them. And then some of them need a donation to take the food. Well, you know, sometimes you don't have that gold coin to make the donation to get the food.” (Key Informant)*

Echoing parent perceptions, large chain stores were said to be unaffordable for families on low-incomes, and subsidised food outlets (e.g., foodbanks) were also often in centralised locations and so not always easily accessible for families. Like some parents, key informants highlighted the need for improving public transport to shopping centres was identified to encourage better food access.

For key informants, role models were one way to encourage healthy eating:

*“So, another thing I think would help is have an interactive program and engage with the role models. So that they could project that kind of, you know, healthy eating habits. Then working with the high schools as well and spreading the services in an innovative way, you know, doing healthy eating challenges or you know, the master chef, which is so much into it, but, you know, involved the younger generation, do something with the young ones.” (Key Informant)*

Similarly, schools were identified as key sites of intervention that should be better equipped, for instance by increasing breakfast clubs, healthy eating education programs for children including practical skills-based components such as sourcing and preparing healthy foods. All participants – children, parents and stakeholders – expressed a keenness to be involved in developing solutions to lack of access to affordable, healthy food and felt that education had a strong role to play:

*“More education needs to be given to the community regarding healthy eating and I'm sure there are so many projects which we are working, but whether it is reaching the cohort we are targeting here is yet to be established.” (Key Informant)*

## Social Problems

Participants identified a wide range of structural and community-based social problems and issues and called for a general increase in services, along with much more community engagement and collaboration to bring about change. They said change requires cooperative and united effort, persistence and a willingness to take risks when designing solutions.

Service workers, parents and children identified a range of social problems, including broad structural issues (racism, violence,

pollution, food access), community-based problems (displays of anger, inter-personal abuse, uncontrolled dogs) and concerns

related to societal perceptions of the area (negative stigma and publicity about Mount Druitt). Participants saw a lack of services as a barrier to addressing these problems, advocating for a general increase in provision of facilities and services:

*“More vets, zoos; more healthy food shops; more and better footpaths; more clothing centres; more hospitals/doctors; more schools & education; more good houses; more parks/play areas; more shelters”*  
(Intergenerational Workshop)

In the intergenerational workshop children and adults had ideas about conditions that were needed for such solutions to be developed. Participants identified three important conditions necessary for positive change to take place: **working unitedly and cooperatively, persistence in tackling issues and the need to take risks** when developing and trying different solutions. Defining clear deadlines by which change should occur was also seen as key to enacting successful change:

*“Being cooperative; having a growth mindset; working together; keep going, going, going”* (Intergenerational Workshop)

*“Stand in solidarity; We’re all in this together you and me.”* (Intergenerational Workshop)

In the parents and intergenerational workshops, participants also proposed a variety of potential solutions. For parents, suggested solutions included creating an alcohol-free area in Mount Druitt or introducing free festivals to encourage community connection and involvement:

*“Problem: Emerton needs its own festival; we don’t have one; Ideas: more local free*

*festivals for community to get involved”*  
(Parents’ Workshop)

Ideas about how to change entrenched social issues also emerged from the key informant interviews. For example, one informant suggested that intergenerational social disadvantage could be addressed by empowering women and newly arrived migrants:

*“... empower the women... so that they can, you know, take their own decisions, and not just for their own self, but also for their families... for their children also, to stand up and know what is around them and how can they get benefit from different things.”*  
(Key Informant)

## RACISM

Across the research activities, both children and adults highlighted racism as an issue in the community, reinforcing it as a significant community concern. Parents linked racism to unwelcoming attitudes in some streets and neighbourhoods as well as to direct expressions of anger and violence. Children and adults identified the need for research to understand more about the impacts and effects of racism in their community. They felt evidence-based initiatives were needed to directly investigate and combat racism including for example, school-based multi-cultural events and whole-of community collaborative approaches.

## Mental Health

Poor mental health and inadequacy of associated support services were key concerns. Concerns around services were wide-ranging, including that there was a general deficit of services, lack of community awareness about services and inadequacy of support specifically for carers, children and families affected by mental illness. Key informants highlighted the effects of personal and community trauma, especially the prevalence of trauma in Aboriginal communities. Key informants suggested services to address trauma and mental health issues were inadequate, and that service providers themselves often lacked the training and skills to effectively address traumatised clients.

Intergenerational workshop participants were also concerned about community mental health. Some felt that there were not enough services or that many people were unaware of the support available (especially migrants). Parents identified the need to improve service provision by making them more approachable and affordable. Others felt carers require added support from more targeted mental health support groups with greater capacity:

*“Ideas: some mental health workshops; free mental health check-ups to make services more approachable and get them to people who need them” (Parents’ workshop)*

*“Mental health support group for carers” (Parents’ workshop)*

Key informants also identified mental health and individual and community trauma as a key concern. Informants said that a significant number of young people in Mount Druitt had experienced some level of trauma and that service providers often lacked the knowledge and skills to recognise or deal with traumatised individuals and provide effective services:

*“[Service providers need to know] what it looks like, and how to work with it, rather than against it.” (Key Informant)*

*“Trauma is a massive thing/issue. Need better training on trauma.” (Key Informant)*

Informants noted that trauma was especially prevalent in Aboriginal communities and children and young people and asserted the need to address that trauma in specific and appropriate ways. Ensuring the appropriate services required to address trauma was seen as necessary:

*“How can we better communicate with kids who have suffered abuse?” (Key Informant)*

*“I’m an Aboriginal woman who has experienced that intergenerational trauma, that community trauma so, you know, I’m very passionate about that.” (Key Informant)*

*“...having the correct services involved, to help educate, and walk that journey with them to be able to unpack it in a healthy, safe environment, and have the supports to move forward. And start the healing...” (Key Informant)*

Aligned to the lack of trauma-informed services, parents and key informants identified a lack of specialist mental health services offering care for children and adults in Mount Druitt to assist recovery from psychological distress or mental illness:

*“There seems to be lacking services for those preteen and younger. And there shouldn’t be because I’m sure there is so much funding that comes into Western Sydney...” (Key Informant)*

## Service Provision and Coordination

A general lack of services, and coordination between services, was of concern to children, parents and stakeholders. Parents thought the quantity of services was lacking. Other stakeholders felt existing services were ineffective. Adult and intergenerational workshop participants agreed that poor coordination and collaboration between services limited the effectiveness of service provision in the community. Participants also agreed that there was poor community awareness of available services, often exacerbated by insufficient intercultural and multi-lingual communication by service providers.

Overall, parents talked about the need to have 'more' support, suggesting that existing services do not meet their needs.

Intergenerational workshop participants wanted to live in a safer and healthier community with improved and more accessible public services: specifically, in education and health. They identified health services they believed need bolstering such as increased COVID vaccinations and more GPs. Key informants had mixed views on the quantity of services in the area, with some suggesting there were too many services, creating dependency rather than empowering people:

*"We keep saying that Mount Druitt, needs services, [but] we have an overload of services ... And then they are trying to grab the client and say, okay, I'll do this, I'll do that. And I'll do that. And then client is saying, alright, if you can do what I'm not going to do. So basically, we are not making them, you know, giving them a chance to come out and, you know, recognize their own strengths" (Key Informant)*

"Well, that is something we are finding that as well. The other challenge is, as I said, the services are concentrated. And, but they are very protective about their clients. So, they're not ready to share the client. And there's a lot of overlapping because of that" (Key Informant)

*"There's no central database (to facilitate interagency comms) -- There's tremendous goodwill - agencies want to come together to help kids. But lack of coordination" (Key Informant)*

Across all workshops and key informant interviews, better coordination of services to improve access, appropriate support and better outcomes were identified as necessary for the critical issues to be addressed. Parents said there was poor community awareness of available services. Key informants also noted the disparity between available services and community knowledge: blaming insufficient resourcing and time to properly develop relationships and build trust:

*"To do this role properly, there needs to be two or three people working full time on it. Because Blacktown LGA [local government area] is huge. And it's a huge population. So, I do feel like I'm only skirting around the edges a little bit." (Key Informant)*

Inability to engage with diverse community members was also seen as a limitation:

*"The main challenge is that in Mount Druitt there are different pockets of communities. So, we find that they are Pakistanis. All right. They are Indians. There are Bangladeshis or they are from Pacific*

*Islands. So, there are different pockets, and they tend to be within that pocket, they don't want to come out of that, that circle. So, we think that the other communities, if we are running a group, we feel that you know, there are families who miss out, we miss out servicing to them because, you know, they don't want to come and interact outside of their community, and because ... you never speak their language in the group.” (Key Informant)*

Participants suggested that simple messaging in different languages and dedicated multicultural engagement could improve delivery outcomes overall:

*“Sometimes we forget that in Mount Druitt we have the people who do not understand the language, English. So, first we need to have things in simple language describe to them if we have fliers, then it should be in a simple language. Also, there are different languages which are widely spoken in Mount Druitt area, we should pick up those languages and translate them into that” (Key Informant)*



And that clear and simple messaging could reduce redundancy between services, for example through collaborative case management:

*“In this collaborative Case Management Program, the client will, will be taken by one service, and that service will be accompanying the client to save every other service. So that, you know, the client must not repeat those things as well, if a client feels much more trusted, and you know, the results come much better” (Key Informant)*

Negative portrayal of Mount Druitt, and indeed Western Sydney was seen as a problem and influencing unfavourable perceptions of the area. Informants felt there was a need to better celebrate success stories in the local community, as a counter to negative external perceptions and to highlight success within the community of service providers and the broader community served by them:

*“We never talk about the good points, success stories of the clients that maybe it is a time for us to come and talk about the successes.” (Key Informant)*

## VISIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

While participants were frank with their opinions and assessments about problems and shortfalls in the community, they also expressed a strong sense of connection and belonging to Mount Druitt as their home and had hopes for the area and its positive future. Children and parents gave us specific feedback about proposed new infrastructure, and shared visions and aspirations for their community. In the intergenerational workshop mixed groups of children and adults developed specific pathways or plans for action through which their ideas might be implemented.

### Parks

In separate activities, children and parents were asked for feedback on the design of the Inclusive Playspace at Nurragingy Reserve: a new community park with extensive play areas under development by Council. Parents were primarily concerned with safety, utility and convenience while children were focused on leisure and play. Parents wanted play areas, bike paths and other activities for children, more fenced areas, community gardens, wheelchair accessible places, and facilities such as BBQs, tables, bins and toilets:

*“Bike/scooter paths with stop signs; contact with rangers; wheelchair safe; shade cloths; more chairs; BBQ setup” (Parents’ workshop)*

Children were more imaginative and wide-ranging in identifying the activities and equipment they wanted to see. They wanted

supervised and unsupervised fun and activities at parks. Suggestions ranged from scavenger hunts, rollercoasters, and paintball to quiet spaces, a library box, and computer rooms and fields and courts for typical sporting activities. While a wide range of activities were discussed by children, the most popular suggestions were flying foxes, tree houses, and laser tag:

*“Flying fox; tree top adventure; running tracks; sports courses + fields inc. Handball; water park + fake beach; garden walk - lots of plants (Children’s Play Project session)*

Participants in the intergenerational workshop were not asked specifically for feedback on the Nurragingy Inclusive Playspace, however, participants wanted more grass, shaded areas, and play equipment in the community.

## Children's Activities

Children in all Living Lab sessions readily provided feedback about activities and programs that they wanted in the community. They reported enjoying and appreciating these opportunities to share their views and generate ideas for a better Mout Druiitt.

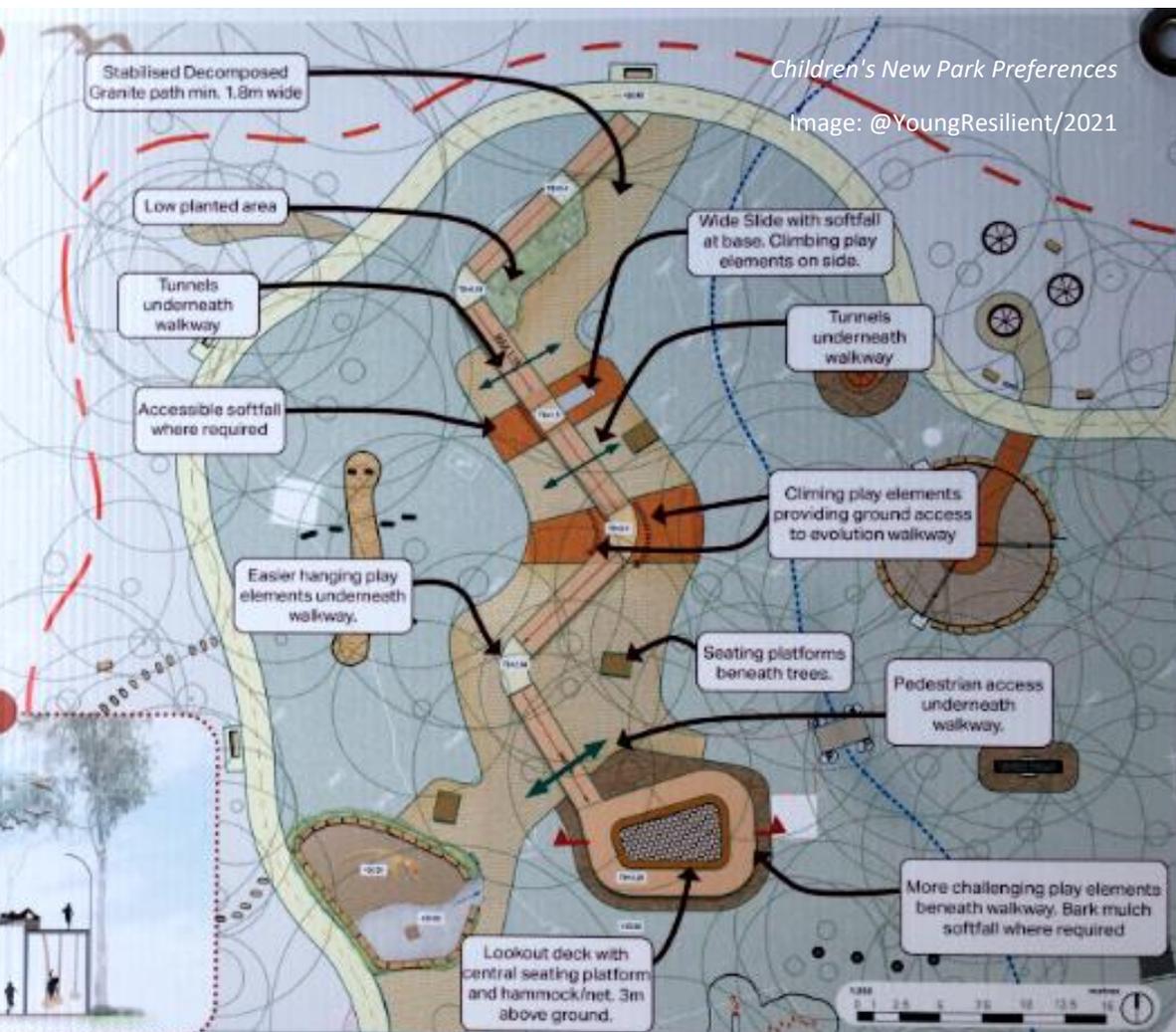
Of the activities offered, children favoured tug-of-war, egg and spoon race, sausage sizzle and ball games. Children proposed other activities they would enjoy for future Play Project or after school program sessions including netball, football, basketball and cricket.

Children said they were not usually asked their opinions outside of school and that they liked being asked for their ideas and feedback.

Parents also enthusiastically shared views on children's activities and how to better engage children in the community. They advocated for more organised and creative activities such as mural painting. Parents felt that there were not enough organised activities for children and that those that were available were not accessible. Existing services, schools and youth centres were seen to engage best with kids:

*Parent group suggestions: Activities through school; More activities after school; More playgroups; F2F [face-to-face] sessions; Fun days (BBQ, jumping castles); [Provision] through local services; More events and [information] updates to keep [children] safe on and off the streets*

### Evolution Walkway: Detail Plan



### Evolution Walkway: Detail Section



## Action Plans

Working in small intergenerational groups in the final workshop, children, parents and local workers chose one of the issues in Mount Druitt that concerns children and generated ideas and action plans to address that issue. Groups were instructed to adopt a 'blue-sky' approach to action planning. In a blue-sky approach, participants assume no barriers or constraints (e.g., funding, personnel, logistics, infrastructure) limiting implementation of their plans. Blue-sky approaches encourage big ideas, collaboration, prompt engagement in creative, non-conformist thinking and adoption of fresh and innovative perspectives. While ideas developed using blue-sky approaches may not be immediately actionable, the process itself is designed to facilitate information exchange and foster relationships between the participants and groups that might lead to further development and realisation of an idea.

Groups surfaced a spectrum of concerns and a range of ideas about overcoming key concerns, represented in Figure 1 below.

### Word Cloud of Participants' Key Concerns



While many suggestions for solutions called for more resourcing, groups emphasized the idea that the community itself had capacity to advance the ideas if people were to become more involved. The six specific action plans developed are summarised below.

## Intergenerational Plans

### CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY AND HEALTHIER CHILDREN

#### Developing community gardens/activity hubs

Turn alleyways into working community gardens (e.g., with rain tanks, lighting, vegetables, chickens/eggs, animals). Investigate adding playground and activity equipment for children. Involve the community in planning, budgeting, purchasing, growing, planting, and maintaining (e.g., host education/participation workshops). Encourage individuals, groups and businesses to donate (e.g., resources, time, labour). Support seniors to act as educators by sharing their hands on skills/experience. Part-fund initiative by selling produce. Incentivise involvement by discounting for volunteers, rewarding recycling in lieu of payment (e.g., for homeless, children).

### ADDRESSING POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

#### Fund and resource initiatives to address homelessness, unemployment and poverty

Increase funding to homeless people directly, through charities and via welfare. Provide more homeless shelters. Initiatives to create employment and opportunity. Regulate to ensure people are paid appropriately for work. Initiatives to better address/eliminate poverty-related social issues like drug addiction, teen pregnancy, bankruptcy, effects of natural disasters/climate change (e.g., fires, drought).

### INCREASING RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES FOR EMERTON YOUTH RECREATION CENTRE

#### Expand activities offered at community centres

[This plan was specific to Emerton Youth Recreation Centre but could be applied more broadly]. Involve children themselves, parents, Council, schools, service providers (e.g., police, firefighters, SES) and other organisations in planning and implementing programs and activities. Offer more varied, relevant and applied activities for children, teens and young people including drama clubs, public speaking, free music and dance programs (e.g., Tik Tok dancing), gymnastics, cooking programs, life skills for youth, art (painting, graffiti, film making, stop motion), leadership programs, peer mentoring (teens mentoring teens), career expos, teenage 'hangout zones' (e.g., with gaming, play stations/computers/x-boxes/Nintendo, secure areas for gaming equipment, headphones etc.).

### DEVELOPING ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

#### Anti-bullying education, awareness and skills programs

Six-step program involving: 1. Awareness raising about issue (e.g., posters, signs); 2. Education about consequences; 3. Encouraging inclusion; 4. Bystander intervention (e.g., how to stand up for the person who needs it); 5. Positive role models (e.g., at school, Years 5 & 6); 6. Adult support (e.g., training and making available more adults for young people to talk to, like teachers, school counsellors, students, police). Implementing 'no bullying at school' policies, promoting kindness and belonging (e.g., 'If you can choose anything choose kindness', 'We all have the right to belong', 'Treat others the way you want to be treated').

### UNDERSTANDING AND CONFRONTING RACISM

#### Research racism and develop activities to encourage acceptance of multi-culturalism

Four-step program involving: 1. Surveying community to understand how many have been hurt/affected by racism and its impacts; 2. Initiating multicultural days at schools each term; 3. Regular reimplementing of racism measure (e.g., repeat survey at end of year). 4. Use ongoing data to revise existing and develop new interventions/initiatives. Involve multiple stakeholders in planning and implementing research and initiatives including school staff (e.g., principals, teacher), students (e.g., school/house captains, student leaders), community (e.g., parents, families, friends and peers). Utilise existing resources for implementation including school halls and involve creative/engaging activities like paint, food, music, dances.

### ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

#### Increase services and protections for homeless people

Providing opportunities for further education and employment in the community. Increasing availability/accessibility of fresh food and encouraging large food providers to donate or make healthy foods cheaper (e.g., fruits, vegetables, water). Provision of affordable housing and necessities. Increasing more accessible outlets that directly provide basic services for homeless people (e.g., hot water, free food providers/vans, places for personal care like barbers). Ensure safety of homeless people and the community (e.g., keeping homeless people off roads).

## SECTION 4

# SUMMARY AND INSIGHTS

Our two aims for this project were to 1/ design and implement a participatory research process to gather data about the concerns of children, parents and stakeholders in Mount Druitt that Council could use to inform solutions to issues, and 2/ to test the participatory research process as a model for a child-centred approach that could be used and adapted by Council and others for ongoing collaborative engagement with children and communities. The two aims hold similar weight in our analysis and conclusions and, thus, address the insights we gained about elevating children's and communities voices and the specific issues that participants identified over the course of the research activities.

Our participatory, child-centred approach effectively engaged participants in an iterative process to build relationships, insights and ideas, explore themes and generate novel data about specific questions. The iterative process adapted to suit different groups in the community and enabled insights from one data collection activity to inform the next.

Participation of diverse and often marginalised groups was supported by:

1. Relationship building and formal consultation with key stakeholders to inform the aims, topics for exploration with children and parents and study design.
2. Periodic informal conversations with key community members to keep our process and activities on track and accessible to children and parents in the community. Focusing activities on surfacing and exploring issues of greatest importance to participants themselves.
3. Making the experience fun, relevant and rewarding. Many participants from the kids' and parents' workshops expressed enthusiasm for the project and were keen to participate in the intergenerational workshop because the experience was interesting, fun, they felt heard and valued and built a sense of trust in the facilitators.

Across the study, the data provided good evidence that all participants – children, parents and stakeholders – had strong visions and aspirations for the Mount Druitt community. Our analysis allowed us to identify key issues of community concern, participant-generated pathways to potentially address those concerns and ways children and parents would like to be engaged in building and improving services, assets and resilience in their community.

In this section we summarise the project insights in 3 key areas:

- Concerns and Solution;
- Advancing Children's Participation; and,
- Promoting Awareness and Collaboration.

## CONCERNS AND SOLUTIONS

Child and adult participants identified critical issues and potential pathways to address concerns that coalesced around five themes:

- **PLAY, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** participants expressed worries about their own safety and the safety of their neighbourhoods and communities.
- **FOOD ACCESS:** participants told us that healthy diets were hard to maintain for many families.
- **SOCIAL PROBLEMS:** participants highlighted a range of overarching structural issues and more locally based social problems in their community
- **MENTAL HEALTH:** participants thought poor mental health was a major concern
- **SERVICE PROVISION:** participants identified issues with the quantity, effectiveness and coordination of available services

Participants' **ideas and aspirations for their community encompassed parks, community engagement and children's participation.** And participants proposed blue-sky action plans to address particular issues: urban health and safety; poverty and unemployment; maximising use of existing youth spaces; bullying; racism; and homelessness.

Issues, concerns and responses identified by participants were diverse. There were some factors unique to specific issues, other factors were common across issues. The common factors are important as they suggest they have widespread influence and, therefore, addressing them has the potential to affect broad-based change. Key common factors included:

- **ACCESSIBILITY** (e.g., of services, resources, support)
- **AWARENESS** (e.g., about services, resources, support)
- **ENGAGEMENT** (e.g., between Council, community and service providers)

Participants' ideas about accessibility frequently related to resourcing and/or logistics such as increasing public transport options or greater provision of resources or physical infrastructure to enhance safe access to and use of public spaces. These factors need consideration and further investigation to promote participation, access and reach of service provision.

In relation to service provision, participants thought that members of the Mount Druitt community lack sufficient awareness of available services (and how to access them), and that effective and meaningful engagement between community and service providers is essential for successful service provision. These two things are also interrelated insofar as increased engagement in community, government and service planning and decision-making often leads to greater awareness and suitability of services.

There are many benefits of enhanced child and community participation for individuals, communities and policy. The overarching importance of engagement is reflected in the interest and enthusiasm that participants expressed about taking part in our project, which they felt was an opportunity to have their voices heard. Below we summarise the key insights from the project that can inform the efforts of Blacktown City Council and other stakeholders to create a child-friendly city.

## ADVANCING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Our approach and research activities were shaped and adapted in response to local knowledge to reduce barriers to participation. Good, iterative engagement can be mutually transformational, encourage children and parents to share experience and ideas and enable participants to see how their ideas and opinions are used. Moreover, we find that:

### Methods Of Engagement Matter

A tailored approach, activities and locations that suit children, parents and or workers enhances participation. Throughout the study we had strong uptake even with short lead times for activities. The methods of engagement that worked well include:

Going to where the community is  
Sessions were run at existing programs or locations that were familiar and trusted.

Using activities that were fun and engaging  
For sessions with children activities were shorter and more active or had active 'icebreaker' activities in between discussion activities.

Encouraging small group work  
Parents and intergenerational group discussions were strengthened by having opportunities for discussion in groups of 3-5.

Honouring trusted community actors  
Working hard to get buy-in from trusted organisations embedded in the community and coordinate activities with them.

Being friendly and respectful  
The research team were friendly, approachable and respectful of community members, including asking their permission to conduct the research activity.

Modelling best practice  
Engaging workers and partners in activities like the intergenerational workshop helped to demonstrate new and best practice community engagement.

### Children Will Enthusiastically Engage

Children readily engaged in activities and appreciated the opportunities to participate in the child-specific and intergenerational contexts. Ways to strengthen children's engagement in feedback and planning processes include:

1. Acknowledging the value of children's expertise and lived experiences.
2. Developing intergenerational processes to identify challenges, strengths and design better communities to help elevate the value of children's ideas and experiences, promote shared understanding and commitment to change-making in the community.

3. Engaging with children in child-safe and child-friendly environments, and incorporating age-appropriate and accessible methods using play, plain language and known facilitators.
4. Approaching engagement with children openly and honestly and being candid about reasons behind and potential outcomes of such engagements.

## More Age-Appropriate Initiatives To Foster Participation

Children and adults identified that specific age cohorts of young people in the Mount Druitt area were not always well catered for and this impacted on broader participation. They suggested ways to improve existing initiatives available to younger children and older teenagers and young adults, including:

1. Mechanisms specifically designed to engage older teenagers in feedback and planning processes about service and programs such as facilitated workshops and online forums.
2. Co-utilise and/or repurpose existing venues for age specific activities and entertainment from young children through to older teenagers.
3. Offer a variety of free programs and initiatives for children including initiatives to engage, entertain and educate with digital and face-to-face options.

## AWARENESS AND COLLABORATION

Lack of awareness of service availability and poor communications and collaborations between services were a significant concern identified by participants in relation to key issues and are related to the question of community engagement. By design, effective engagement with community contributes to better awareness and knowledge. What's more, where meaningful engagement takes place, knowledge transfer operates both ways – for example, communities learn from government and providers and governments and providers learn from communities. Insights from this study demonstrate that better community engagement – including with children - has the potential to address both issues.

### Community Awareness

Parents reported community awareness of available resources and services, and mechanisms to engage with service providers and decision makers (e.g., Council) about design and implementation of infrastructure and services were inadequate. Potential options for strengthening community engagement with services and decision-makers include:

Utilisation of existing community resources to host and encourage engagement, including cultural leaders, schools, churches and other places of worship, men's sheds, ethnic or cultural groups and networks.

Culturally appropriate initiatives to empower women and newly arrived migrants to access services and have a say.

Services and Council utilising a greater variety of culturally appropriate mediums to share information including online communications, resurrecting the community paper, letterbox drops, household calendars including information about significant events, using free coffee vans to provide a space for casual chats and information exchange.

Regular facilitated consultations or workshops to explore community concerns and needs.

## Communication Between Service Providers For Greater Effectiveness

Participants suggest that improved communication between different services operating in the Mount Druitt area and more systematic collaboration between services could strengthen outcomes for the community and reduce redundancy between services. Ways to strengthen collaborations are:

Regular, dedicated meetings between services to plan and implement processes for systematic collaboration

Accessible culturally appropriate services hubs and/or client engagement points in community-friendly places where clients could access a range of coordinated services, including specialist provision for indigenous communities.

Consolidated case file system and/or collaborative case management that would follow clients across different service interactions, so they are not repeating information at each new interaction.

We have presented and discussed a broad range of process, data and analysis around the work we have undertaken with child and adult participants in Mount Druitt to surface and understand their lived experiences, concerns, opinions and visions for engaging with Council and service providers to help make Mount Druitt a child-friendly community. Our work demonstrates the potential of meaningful child- and community-centred engagements for informing the planning and decision-making of Council and other service providers.

In the concluding section of this report we present a set of specific recommendations to assist with the practical application of a child-centred and intergenerational approach to working for – and with - kids.

Intergenerational Workshop Participant and Data Collection



## RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations have been collaboratively identified and many need a collective approach from Council, local services, community leaders, parents and children. Given Blacktown City Council's commitment to building a Child Friendly Community it is well positioned to play a leading role in convening multi-stakeholder partnerships with community to identify and address areas for action. Not only do these recommendations from community align with Blacktown City Council's Community Strategic Plan Our Blacktown 2036 Our vision, our plan, they also align with the work, approach and aspirations of the many organisations and government initiatives whose work impacts children and their families in Mount Druitt.

### PROMOTE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Expand the range of mechanisms for children to meaningfully inform planning and decision-making feedback in Council, local programs and services
- Regularly and publicly acknowledge the value of children's abilities and lived experiences
- Set the bar high for what can be achieved if children are meaningfully engaged in planning and decision-making processes. Set realistic expectations with children and decision makers about the reasons for and potential outcomes of engagement activities
- Design and undertake engagement with children in child-safe and child-friendly environments, and incorporate age-appropriate, accessible and engaging methods.

### DEVELOP INTERGENERATIONAL PROCESSES TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE, SHARED VALUES AND IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING

- Involve community and cultural leaders in the design and delivery of sessions with children. This can foster new networks of participation and expertise and building community capacity.
- Bring children and adults together to identify challenges and strengths and to design better communities. This helps elevate the value of children's ideas and experiences, promote shared understanding and commitment to change-making in the community
- Regularly obtain feedback from children who take part in community programs. Kids want to have a say, have good ideas and can support continuous improvement.

*The recommendations above directly support the focus areas in Blacktown City Council Community Strategic Plan- Strategic Direction 5: A Leading City.*

## CREATE CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY SPACES AND SERVICES

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### Vibrant and inclusive community spaces:

- Better utilise existing community organisations and resources to host engagement activities. Promote participation for different age groups and program more free initiatives for children with children. Support participation by improving resourcing to enable use of current facilities including more staff and longer-term funding for programs
- Engage the whole community to empower, educate, and bring people together to address the problems the community identifies
- Invest in regular, dedicated meetings between services to plan and implement processes for systematic collaboration and to build trust and effective collaboration
- Improve quality of and access to existing services in the community by helping residents, local workers and services understand availability and monitor use
- Support access with free transport and other resources such as childcare
- Support accessible culturally appropriate services, hubs and information resources in community-friendly places to support access to a range of coordinated services, including specialist provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, women and recently arrived migrants
- Celebrate children's participation and the success of community efforts.

### Safe community:

- Improve the safety and cleanliness of public spaces and facilities including basic amenities such as toilets
- Co-design, with the community, interventions in public space to encourage safe, respectful use
- Activate and support job opportunities in Mount Druitt and the people who live there
- Invest in Aboriginal-led and child-centred trauma responses
- Increase skills and awareness amongst service providers to recognise and communicate appropriately with traumatised people to improve community experience.

*The recommendations above directly support the focus areas in Blacktown City Council Community Strategic Plan Strategic Direction 1: A Vibrant and Inclusive city and Strategic Direction 3: Smart and Prosperous city.*

## **ENABLE HEALTHY LIVING**

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- Increase school-based healthy eating education programs for children including practical skills-based components (e.g., sourcing healthy foods, cooking)
- Promote mobile community pantries/food vans where low-income families live
- Green the city
- Community-based culturally appropriate awareness and education campaigns for adults and children alike to understand and value healthier food options, including involving healthy-eating role models.

*The recommendations above directly support the focus areas in Blacktown City Council Community Strategic Plan, Strategic Direction 2: A clean, sustainable and healthy environment.*

## **LEVERAGE ENGAGEMENT TO CREATE INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES**

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- Build more infrastructure in consultation with the community. Focus engagement efforts on those children and community members who are not usually asked for their perspectives using family interviews and feedback session in collaboration with community partners programs.
- Provide free transport routes to support access to healthy food sources and local environment
- Design public infrastructure with the community, especially children, to accommodate the range of users/uses leisure, relaxation, play and socialising.

*The recommendations above directly support the focus areas in Blacktown City Council Community Strategic Plan, Strategic Direction 4: A growing city supported by accessible infrastructure.*



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Scoping Workshop Agenda

Activity	Description	Materials
<p>Welcome participants, explain the purpose of the workshop and outline ethical obligations.</p>	<p>Acknowledgement of Country            Introduce facilitators, workshop, project.            Provide an overview of the project and workshops, including the aims and purpose of this scoping workshop and the project more broadly.            What is a Living Lab?            Explain how the workshop outputs will be used and how we will communicate them.            Ethical matters - consent, no obligation to participate, free to withdraw at any time, who to contact in case of distress or discomfort.</p> <p>Reminder - Feedback: Idea trees</p>	<p>Slides</p>
<p>Encourage participants to get to know each other and help them feel comfortable in the space.</p> <p>Emphasise centring children's views and needs in our work.'</p>	<p>Ice-breaker, introductions</p> <p>Who are you/where do you work?            What are you hearing from children or parents in Mount Druitt?            a. One concern; b. One Dream            How do you know? What are some ways you listen to what children or families have to say?</p>	<p>Ear Template</p>
<p>Understand what they are currently doing, and which services are addressing issues of food access/play/digital inclusion directly or indirectly.</p>	<p>Community Services            Ask everyone to mark on map where their service/s are located and what they deliver for CYP.            Note: specifically, are they doing work that directly/indirectly seeks to address issues of food access/play/digital inclusion directly or indirectly</p> <p>Debrief/Group Feedback</p> <p>Note points of intersection, gaps, opportunities</p>	<p>Butcher's paper</p> <p>Markers</p> <p>Blue tack</p> <p>Map of Mount Druitt</p> <p>Icons for service, activities, food access, play and digital inclusion</p>
<p>Explore perspectives on the three key challenges.</p>	<p>Issues Tree</p> <p>World Cafe to create Issues Trees.</p> <p>The trunk represents the problem or issue; the roots represent the causes of the issue; the branches represent the consequences of the issue; and the 'bad apples' represent the obstacles to addressing the issue.</p>	<p>Butcher's paper</p> <p>Markers</p>

Explore perspectives on addressing the key challenges.	<p>Thriving Gardens What is working to address these issues?</p> <p>Add to the Issues Tree' by building a Thriving Gardens Asset map around them.</p> <p>Sun - people Water - things (places, programs, initiatives) Soil – organisations Birds/insects – communications/interactions/engagement channels</p> <p>Debrief/Group Feedback – How are you working together?</p>	Previous activity sheet  Markers
Understand issue prioritisation.	<p>Priorities</p> <p>Each participant is asking to cast an anonymous vote or rank the issues in order of priority.</p> <p>Reminder - Feedback: Idea trees</p>	Coloured stickers/printouts or tokens and containers
Understanding Success	<p>Success Time Machine</p> <p>What does success look like if we were able to address these problems (food-access, play, digital Inclusion)?</p> <p>Prompts: Who and what is involved? What are they doing differently to now?</p> <p>Contribute to wherever you have ideas.</p> <p>Debrief/Group Feedback</p>	Butcher's paper  Markers  Stick notes
Obtain input on the broader project and insight into how to improve the process.	<p>Your Advice</p> <p>Facilitators present on the project and ask how we improve the process. Are there specific things to be mindful of or stakeholders that we need to engage with?</p>	Facilitators note-taking.
Wrap-up, next steps	<p>Thank participants for taking part. Explain what will happen next, including future data collection activities and opportunities for involvement.</p>	N/A

## Appendix 2: After-School Small Group Sessions with Children Agenda

Activity	Description	Materials
Welcome participants, explain the purpose of the workshop and outline ethical obligations.	<p>Introduce facilitators and project.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the project and workshops, including the aims and purpose of this workshop and the project more broadly.</p> <p>Explain how the workshop outputs will be used and how we will communicate them.</p> <p>Explain ethical matters - consent, no obligation to participate, free to withdraw at any time, who to contact in case of distress or discomfort.</p> <p>Reiterate purpose is to hear kids ideas and use their views to inform what council and others do.</p>	N/A
Feedback on park design	<p>Explain purpose is to discover what activities kids want in park and why they like/don't like different things.</p> <p>Children use sticky-dots to mark activities they like on proposed park design plan</p>	<p>Park design plan</p> <p>Sticky dots</p>
Feedback on After School Program	<p>Children's ideas about the After School Program</p> <p>Use rope to form a large circle.</p> <p>If children like an activity they jump inside the rope circle.</p> <p>If children dislike an activity they jump stay outside the rope circle ROPE activity.</p> <p>Call out activities: e.g., touch football, kick around, cricket, throwing balls, catapult, sack race, eating sausage sizzle!</p> <p>Ask if children would like other activities [examples]: boardgames, lego, storytellers, gardening, baby animals visit.</p> <p>Ask "If you ran the After School program what activities would you have and WHY?" (no limits)</p>	Rope
Food and Diet	<p>Explain we now want children's ideas about food: what you eat mostly; what you should eat to be healthy; what stops you eating what makes you healthy?</p> <p>Rob the Nest game to show: what do you eat in an average day? (individuals rob the nest ) as a group, put the foods in the centre that make kids healthy and strong</p> <p>Ask what stops kids in Mount Druitt from eating these foods?</p>	<p>Paper plates</p> <p>Toy food</p> <p>Food icons</p>
Wrap-up, next steps	<p>Thank participants for taking part.</p> <p>Explain what will happen next.</p>	N/A

## Appendix 3: Parents' Workshop Agenda

Objective	Activity	Materials
<p>Welcome participants, explain the purpose of the workshop and outline ethical obligations.</p>	<p>Welcome Introduce facilitators, workshop, project. Provide an overview of the project and workshops, including the aims and purpose of this workshop and the project more broadly. What is a Living Lab? Explain how the workshop outputs will be used and how we will communicate them. Ethical matters - consent, no obligation to participate, free to withdraw at any time, who to contact in case of distress or discomfort.</p>	<p>Slides</p>
<p>Feedback on park design, account for adult stakeholder views and centre the experiences of children.</p>	<p>Parents use sticky-dots to mark activities they like on proposed park design plan  What are the good things about the parks in Mount Druitt? What do you want to see more of? What can be improved? What do you want to see less of?  Ask about other needs/ideas for play spaces for kids. Where is the dream park located? What would help parents access these spaces?</p>	<p>Park design plan  Butchers paper  Markers  Sticky dots</p>
<p>Exploring participants' concerns about the community and engagement.</p>	<p>What are important issues for you in this community? What do you think needs to be done to make it better?  In what ways do you like to be asked by Council and other services about your views? Are there other ways you communicate with services or council?  How/ would you like to be involved in coming up with responses to these issues? Why/Why not?  What do you need to be able to take part?</p>	<p>Butchers paper  Markers</p>
<p>Wrap-up, next steps</p>	<p>Thank participants for taking part. Explain what will happen next. Give details of future data collection activities and opportunities for involvement.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

## Appendix 4: Intergenerational Workshop Agenda

Objective	Activity	Materials
Welcome	Acknowledgement of country Introduce project team and project briefly Process of learning about how to engage with each other to work together to make the most of the Mount Druitt community.	Slide deck
Introductions to one another	Participants introduce themselves: Who are you and why are you here? In what way do you make Mount Druitt a wonderful place for kids and families?  Put a Sticky dot on the map in the area you live, or that you know well or that is special to you.  Debrief: Acknowledge there are a range of perspectives and experiences in the room. It is your diversity and participation are what make this process possible and powerful.	Slide Deck  Mount Druitt giant map  Sticky dots: Green – YP Blue – Parents Orange – workers Yellow – YAG
Presentation of what we have learned and what today is about.	WSU/BCC debrief on process so far and what we have learned from them.  Overview of the workshops research so far: Workshop with stakeholders to get a feel for services and challenges. Interviews with service providers Workshops with children in Emerton, Lethbridge Park and Whalan Workshops with parents in Bidwill  What we learnt from you: Review of existing data on community needs and concerns.  What we are doing today: Further exploring the research themes: Youth voice Access to play and recreation. Access to food	Slide deck
Energiser	Get in a line from tallest to shortest!  Time them and write up in a visible place!	N/A

Develop understanding of what is valued in community.	Imagine that Mount Druitt was the best place in Australia for children. What does it look like?	Slide deck
	Write down: What has changed? What has stayed the same? Who was involved? (Are they different/same?) What did they do? What is the effect? How does it feel?	Butchers paper Markers
	Remember this is BLUE SKY (imagine we have the power and authority to implement any actions to achieve this)	
	Debrief.	
Activity that explores some existing challenges and potential solutions in the community.	Now we are going to create a wall of things that gets in the way of Mount Druitt being the best place in Australia for children – now or in the future. Using the post-it notes write down some of the issues or obstacles in the community. Stick them on the big piece of paper to make a big brick wall.	Slide deck Butchers paper Markers
	Next, we are going to think about the things that help you and the community get over these challenges. Using another sheet of butcher's paper. Draw a gigantic ladder. Now write up and down the ladder the things that help address the bricks on your wall.	Sticky notes
	Debrief and mention that these will be hung up gallery-style for all to see during the break.	
Opportunity for participants to reflect on others' ideas.	Invite participants to view the worksheets displayed around the room.	N/A
Energiser	Get in a line from tallest to shortest!	N/A
	We time them and write up in a visible place!	
	Did they beat their time?	
Develop an action plan for addressing issues in the community.	Now we are going to choose an issue your group wants to address and come up with a plan.	Blue tack
	What is the issue you want to address?	Butchers paper
	What IMPACT do you want to have; how will things be different in two-year's time because of your plan?	Markers
	What STEPS or actions do you need to take in the next two years to make your plan work?	Sticky notes
	Who are the PEOPLE you need to make your plan happen? What THINGS do you need to make your plan work?	

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Participants present	Each group to summarise: The desired end The action idea Who is involved? What is the impact?  Invite 1 - 2 questions from the group per theme presentation	N/A
Wrap-up, next steps	Discuss our reflections on the day. Recap what we have achieved and outline next steps. Thank everyone.	Slide deck

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## Appendix 5: Key Informant Interview Schedule

Interviewer will confirm information/consent details and explain the nature and purpose of the project.

Collects following demographic details: Name, age, gender, organisation.

Interview questions (note that questions are intended to guide the interview and interviewees are free to answer/discuss any issues they believe are relevant).

- What is your role description?
- How long have you been at <your organisation>?
- How long have you been in your current role?
- Does your role involve working with other people/organisations to achieve goals (who, what)?
- For you, what are the key/most important things you do and look to achieve in your role?
- What are the key challenges or barriers that make it harder for you or your org to achieve your goals in the Mount Druitt area?
- What are the key areas of opportunity that could be taken advantage of that would make the most difference to your role?
- Thinking specifically about children, what are the major areas of opportunity for them in the area?
- What about challenges - what are the main challenges or barriers for children?
- If we think about access to healthy foods in particular, what are the main barriers to children's access?
- What are the key things that can be done to make access better?

Now I want to talk about engaging with children and young people in Mount Druitt about issues that affect them - so, communicating with and understanding young people's needs, priorities, ideas and opinions:

- If you think about the work you and other organisations do in the Mount Druitt area, what are the main barriers or challenges to engaging with children and young people?
- What about enablers or opportunities - what are the main things that help or can potentially assist to engaging with young people here in the Mount Druitt area?
- If we think about engaging with children to support council and other stakeholders to hear and work with children to meet their needs - what would that look like? What is good engagement with children to understand and meet their needs?
- What do you wish *could* be done to hear children's views and act on them?
- Are there any other things you'd like to tell that you think are important or that we should know about that are relevant to Mount Druitt's goal to create child friendly communities or that affect children's wellbeing in general?

Participants are thanked for their time and next project steps explained.



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